

# For the Sabbath School.

International S.S. Lesson.

LESSON X.—DECEMBER 3.—James i. 16-27.

## GRATEFUL OBEDIENCE.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"We love him because he first loved us."—1 John iv. 19.

**CENTRAL TRUTH.**—"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

**JAMES.**—(1) Either James the apostle, son of Alphaeus, and, if so, a cousin of Jesus, and called his brother, perhaps because he was adopted into the family of Mary; or, far more probably, (2), James, the own brother of the Lord, and a different person from the apostle. In either case, this James was the president or pastor of the church at Jerusalem, a very influential person. Josephus says he was stoned to death in A.D. 61 or early in 62.

**THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.**—(1) Written to the Christian Jews everywhere. Many from all parts came up to Jerusalem to attend the great feasts. (2) Time of writing—Uncertain. Some say, A.D. 45, others, as late as A.D. 61 or 62. (3) Where written—At Jerusalem, the home of James.

**PARALLELS.**—This book more than any other reflects the language of the Sermon on the Mount, and has close resemblances to Proverbs.

**TREASURES.**—To be read and re-read: i. 1, 2; i. 5-7; i. 12, 17, 26, 27; ii. 1, 2, 14-18, 22, 26; iii. 1, 2, 13, 17; iv. 5-8; v. 12-20.

**HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.**—16. "Do not err:" in believing that God is the author of evil. 17. "The Father of lights:" the Creator of the heavenly bodies which give us light, and the Author of all spiritual light. "No variableness:" always the same in character and principles. Never retracts His promises or changes His purposes. "Shadow of turning:" shadow caused by the turning or revolution of the heavenly bodies. 18. "A kind of firstfruits:" the firstborn of the flock, the firstfruits of the harvest were consecrated to God (Num. xv. 19-21), as showing that all came from Him, and all should be used for Him. Christians were the beginning of the conversion of the whole world to Christ. 21. "Superfluity of naughtiness:" overflowing of malice from a bad heart. 25. "Perfect law of liberty:" the truths and moral teachings of the Gospel which make men free (1) from sin, (2) from bad habits, (3) in the natural flowing of a good life from a good heart. 26. "Bridleth not his tongue:" as a horse is bridled to control and guide him. 27. "Pure religion:" Religion here is observance of religious rites and services. This is the way the love of God shows itself.

**SUBJECTS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND SPECIAL REPORTS.**—James.—The Epistle of James.—God as the source of every good gift.—The Father of lights.—Christians a kind of firstfruits.—The illustrations in vs. 23-26.—The law of liberty.—Nature of true religion.—Unspotted from the world.

## QUESTIONS.

**INTRODUCTORY.**—Who was the author of this epistle? What can you relate of his life and character? When and where was the letter written? To whom? What is the subject of the verses previous to the lesson?

## SUBJECT: THE NATURE OF TRUE RELIGION.

**I. ITS SOURCE FROM GOD (vs. 16-18).**—Why are the brethren exhorted not to err? What is it to err? What is the source of every good gift? Does anything that is not good come from God? Why is God called the Father of lights? (John i. 3-9) What is said of His character? Meaning of "shadow of turning"? Has God no variations of feeling or action? What is meant by unchangeableness in a spirit? What comfort to us in the fact that God never changes? What is the source of our Christian life? (John iii. 3, 5.) What were the "firstfruits"? (Num. xv. 19-21; Ex. xxiii. 19.) How many Christians be said to be a kind of firstfruits of all God's creatures?

**II. SOME OF ITS DUTIES AND DANGERS (vs. 19-25).**—What three exhortations in v. 19? What is it to be swift to hear? Why should we be slow to speak? Why slow to wrath? Why does anger never do any good? What two things must be laid aside? How should the Word be received? How does it save our souls? What two ways are there of treating God's Word? What are the "hearers only" like? Why? In what respect is God's Word like a mirror? Why is it called the law of liberty? What is said of the doers? How are they blessed in their doing?

**III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE RELIGION (vs. 26, 27).**—What is it to bridle the tongue? Why is doing this a sign of the true religious life? What is meant by "religion" in v. 27? Why is it spoken of as "undefiled before God"? What is the first service of true religion? Why are these two classes mentioned? If we despise or neglect the poor or the weak, is it a proof that we are not Christians? Why is doing good to the needy a true religious service? Will any number of ceremonies or forms of worship take the place of this? What does Christ say in Matt. xxv. 31-46? What is the other characteristic of true religion? Meaning of "world" here? What is it to be unspotted from the world?

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. All good things are from God to make us love Him who is so good.
2. God being unchangeable, His words and promises, spoken thousands of years ago, are as true and certain as if uttered to-day.
3. Because we are God's children, we should speak and act in a manner worthy of our Father.
4. Scolding and anger never do any good (v. 20.)
5. Every act of love to our fellowmen may be also an act of worship toward God.

## Lesson in Shorter Catechism.

**QUEST. 75.** What is forbidden in the eighth commandment.

**Ans.** The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbour's wealth or outward estate.

## PARAPHRASE FORMED.

The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever [does really at the time, or what at some future period may] unjustly [stop, or prevent the increase of] our own or our neighbour's wealth or outward estate.

## DOCTRINES PROVED.

Wealth is not to be procured or retained by unlawful means.—1 Tim. vi. 10. "The love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

We are not to neglect lawful means for procuring wealth for ourselves and families.—1 Tim. v. 8. "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

We are not to do that which may hinder the increase of our wealth and outward estate.—Prov. xxiii. 21. "The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags."

We are not to neglect the relief of our neighbour, or the furtherance of his wealth when it is in our power.—Deut. xv. 8. "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shall surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth."

We are not to do anything which may hinder the furtherance of our neighbour's wealth.—Zech. viii. 17. "Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour."

"My body has been in the Sabbath school for many years, but my soul has been there only a year and a half," said a teacher, in speaking of his new interest in the work of winning children to the service of Jesus, and training them therein. How many teachers in the Sabbath school can say that their souls are in their work? Who of them can cry out, "With my whole heart have I sought thee?"